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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, the source of power and might, strengthen us. Lord, strengthen our faith so that we will trust You in our seasons of joy and sadness. Strengthen our will so that we will choose the difficult right and resist the easy wrong. Strengthen our decisions so that we will not vacillate when commitment is needed. Strengthen our affection so that we will learn to love You as You have first loved us. Lord, strengthen our Senators to believe that Your purposes will ultimately prevail.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The Senator from California.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 8987

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for a second time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 8987) to amend the Justice for United States Victims of State Sponsored

Terrorism Act to authorize appropriations for catch-up payments from the United States Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund.

Mr. PADILLA. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENATOR-ELECT PETER WELCH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, a few minutes ago, before I opened the Senate, I had the privilege of walking on the floor with Senator-elect PETER WELCH of Vermont. I am going to speak more about our new Senator, who will be taking this seat very shortly, within the next few days.

I would note, as we walked on the floor, unlike the first time I walked on the floor, Senator-elect WELCH has a great deal of experience from his years as being one of the leaders in the House of Representatives. As Congressman WELCH, he has the right, of course, to come on the floor, but also, as Senator-elect WELCH, he has that right.

I told him that, when I first came here, we were actually a 99-Member Senate because there had been a tied race in my neighboring State of New Hampshire. I was number 99, the most junior Member of the Senate. I would have been the youngest Member of the Senate, but there was one Senator who

came in 2 years before who was younger, a Senator from Delaware named Joseph R. Biden. We were the kids of the Senate.

Frank Church was a distinguished Senator, and I had been meeting with him. A vote was starting, and he said: I have got to go to the floor, but come with me.

When I got to the door out there, I was still the State's attorney of Chittenden County, VT, and county prosecutor. So, naturally, I stopped at the door.

He said, "No, no, Senators-elect have the privilege of the floor," which, even if he had not been a Congressman, Senator-elect WELCH would have had.

I started forward, and the doorman said: I am sorry. The Senate is in session.

Senator Church said: Well, this is Senator LEAHY—Senator-elect LEAHY.

It was the first time anybody had called me "Senator."

Then I saw him go down his list. "Oh, ah, good morning, Senator LEAHY." So I am, like, maybe this is going to work out.

I walked on the floor, and I saw all of these giants of the Senate in here for a vote. It took me a little while to get used to it. I think, with Congressman WELCH, on January 3, when I will be privileged to see him be sworn in as a new Senator, he won't take any time to get used to it. He knows the decorum of both bodies. Like the vast majority of Vermonters, I am very proud to have him here.

Also, in realizing the distinguished Presiding Officer is not allowed to respond to comments about himself, I would note for the record that there were cheers in our very small State of Vermont when our country's largest State reelected the now Presiding Officer. We are pleased—both my wife, Marcelle, and I—to see that.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, on Respect for Marriage, the 117th Congress will go down, I believe, as one of the most successful Congresses we have seen in decades. We are all so proud of that fact. Over the last 2 years, this Chamber has passed historic and bipartisan bills that have covered everything from infrastructure to gun safety, to CHIPS and Science, to veterans' aid, and more. Again, a common theme for many of these bills was bipartisanship. Very soon, the Senate can add to our accomplishments when we vote to proceed on the Respect for Marriage Act.

For the information of all Senators, we will hold our first procedural vote on this bill tomorrow, and after that, I hope both sides can work quickly together to move this bill through the Senate and on to the President's desk.

I firmly believe that passing bipartisan marriage protections would be one of the more significant accomplishments in what has already been a significantly productive Congress. It will do so much good for so many people who want nothing more than to live their lives without the fear of discrimination.

And make no mistake that passing the Respect for Marriage Act is as personal as it gets for many of us in this Chamber—myself included—so we want to get this done as soon as we can.

A mere decade ago, marriage discrimination was legal in many places across the country. And just a few months ago, when the Supreme Court overturned *Roe*, Justice Thomas wrote in a concurring opinion that *Obergefell*, which recognized the constitutional right to same-sex marriage, could similarly be overturned. I hope that never happens, but the Senate can eliminate the risk of LGBTQ Americans having their rights curtailed if we act now to codify marriage protections into law.

The Respect for Marriage Act is precisely the kind of bill that Democrats and Republicans can rally around together and which Americans across the country want to see us work on. It already passed the House earlier this year with significant—47—Republican votes, and I am optimistic we can achieve a similar result in this Chamber. Senators BALDWIN, SINEMA, and a number of my Republican colleagues, including Senators COLLINS and

PORTMAN and TILLIS, have done excellent work building support for this bill, and I want to recognize all their efforts here on this floor.

I hope that, at minimum, 10 Republicans will be ready to throw their support behind this sound, commonsense bill. Millions of people will be better off if we are able to work together on this important and highly personal issue, and so I urge all of us to vote yes when the time comes to move forward tomorrow.

MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, on the midterm elections and MAGA Republicanism, over the past week, there has been a lot of discussion here in Washington and across the media about how the results of these midterms defied history and defied conventional wisdom.

I remember back in April and May: No way Democrats are going to keep the majority. They are going to lose a whole bunch of seats. People are asking what happened. Well, I think the answer, however, is rather simple. This year, Democrats ran strong candidates. We compiled an extremely strong legislative record, which the candidates could run on. And Republicans, on the other hand, ran with flawed candidates who spent more time talking about MAGA extremism than the things that truly mattered to the American people.

After the failures—Republican failures—in elections in 2018 and 2020 and now in 2022, I hope the message is sinking in. If Republicans continue to embrace MAGA radicalism, they are going to keep losing. So for their own sake, but more importantly for the sake of the country, I hope that very soon the GOP rejects the MAGA wing and makes a commitment to work with Democrats in the next Congress.

The worst thing Republicans can do right now is to double down on the MAGA platform and embrace gridlock. But, sadly, it seems that is the path that some on the other side still want to take.

In fact, Senator RICK SCOTT of Florida, who notoriously led the unsuccessful Republican Senate campaign efforts, recently suggested that one of the reasons Republicans lost on election day was because they actually worked too much with Democrats to pass bipartisan legislation; that they weren't MAGA enough. That defies all logic.

If Republicans want to follow RICK SCOTT's lead, make our day. Following Senator SCOTT is like following a blind man right over the cliff.

Remember, it was Senator SCOTT who released a platform calling for tax hikes on working and middle Americans, which our candidates reminded people of in the election over and over again. It was Senator SCOTT who threatened to put Medicare and Social Security on the chopping block, which, again, was one of the most powerful ar-

guments for why Republicans were wrong for the country. And it was Senator SCOTT who embraced Trump and believed that the MAGA wing was the road to success; that denying the elections and spreading the Big Lie, encouraging the MAGA extreme wing was the right thing to do. The American people knew better.

American voters ran in the opposite direction and voted for Democrats, including many Republicans, who said: I may be a Reagan Republican, I may be a Bush Republican, but this Republican Party ain't one for me.

After three failed elections—three in a row—it should be obvious that embracing MAGA is a total loser for the Republican Party. If anyone thinks otherwise, just look at what happened last night in purple Arizona. Katie Hobbs, the Democratic nominee for Governor, was declared the winner in her race against Kari Lake. Everyone thought Kari Lake would win because of her communication skills, but even she lost—proof positive that MAGA just doesn't work.

I earnestly hope that in the next couple of months, Republicans will realize it is better for the country—and even better for their party—to focus instead on working with Democrats over the next 2 years to get things done for the American people.

Now, I know this is not going to happen overnight or in the next week or two. Our immediate focus, of course, is the lameduck, where there is a lot of work to be done. But when the dust settles come January and Republicans have, hopefully, resolved some of their own internal fights, we hope that at least some of them will realize that the scorched-earth MAGA policy is a failure not only for America but for them.

The usual pundits and skeptics and critics are saying: Oh, this won't happen. But look at the major bills we did this summer, five of them major bills, bipartisan, and before that, the BIF bill, the Postal bill, all done bipartisan—significant legislation. We Democrats are going to work hard to replicate that effort.

Americans are tired of the chaos. They are tired of the MAGA insanity. They are tired of the MAGA attack on the very roots of our democracy. They want leaders who will take their problems seriously. Most Americans know that Donald Trump is out for himself and only himself, even if it hurts democracy, even if it hurts the Republican Party. Republicans should learn that lesson or risk even more failure in the future.

TRIBUTE TO JUSTIN GOODMAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, let me finish, Mr. President, on a truly bittersweet note.

Over the many years I have had the honor of serving in public service, I have learned that there are a handful of genuinely irrefutable truths, and one of them that certainly applied for me